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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (thematic cluster I: Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi) (A/71/365/Add.6). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 8 December 2016.

[1] The Secretary-General provides the explanation for the separate addendum in his main report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/71/365, para. 18).

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2. The main report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2017 for 31 special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. The first five addenda to the main report cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (A/71/365/Add.1-5). The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions, including the Committee's comments on the Kuwait Joint Support Office, are contained in the main report of the Committee (A/71/595), and the budget proposals for 9 of the 11 missions grouped under thematic cluster I relating to the special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General, excluding the two missions covered in the present report, are covered in its related report (A/71/595/Add.1).

3. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly approved a biennial provision of $1,124.4 million net under section 3 Political affairs, of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for 2016-2017 for special political missions (resolution 70/249 A). A summary of the provision for the biennium 2016-2017 is provided in annex I to the main report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365). The biennial provision excludes the proposed resource requirements pertaining to the two missions under consideration in the present report.

II. Resource requirements

A. Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

Background

4. Since the beginning of the uprising in Yemen in early 2011, the Secretary-General has used his good offices to promote peace and stability through dialogue and negotiations. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Office of the Special Envoy was established in 2012. In its resolution 2216 (2015) the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to intensify his good offices role in order to enable the resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led transition process. Following continuing hostilities, the President of the Security Council, in a statement of 25 April 2016 called on all Yemeni parties to develop a road map for, inter alia, the implementation of interim security measures, the restoration of state institutions and the resumption of political dialogue (S/PRST/2016/5). Pursuant to a related request from the Council asking the Secretary-General to present a plan outlining how the Office of the Special Envoy could support the next phase of its work with the parties, the Secretary-General set out a proposal to strengthen the Office. The Council took note of the proposal, in which it was indicated that the Office would lead United Nations assistance in: the peace talks; the expanded facilitation and provision of technical advice to the Yemeni parties; and the implementation of the initial stages of agreements (A/71/365/Add.6, paras. 1-11).

5. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that security conditions in Yemen are expected to remain very challenging for United Nations staff, such that the Office and most of its staff will be based outside of Yemen with periodic travel to the country as and when required and as security and operational conditions permit.

The Secretary-General has expressed his intention to move the Office of the Special Envoy from New York to Amman, from where it would serve as an initial hub for the provision of support to Yemeni parties and for operations in Yemen. The presence of the Office in Sana'a would remain limited initially, but would increase over time as security and operational conditions permit (A/71/365/Add.6, para. 25).

6. In order to fulfil the new responsibilities and tasks of the Office, the report indicates that there will be a need for additional staff with expertise in political mediation and facilitation, electoral affairs, ceasefire, disengagement, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and other security sector issues, with a related increase in the existing mission support and safety and security capacities (A/71/365/Add.6, para. 29). The Special Envoy will travel to Yemen and to the region on a regular basis in order to maintain close contact with all stakeholders (ibid., para. 30).

7. The activities of the Office have been financed through an appropriation totalling $6,730,100 for 2016. The Advisory Committee recalls that in July 2016 its concurrence was sought for the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $2,965,800 to meet the above-mentioned additional requirements. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 3 October 2016, the Committee expressed certain reservations about the level of the request, including on the patterns of expenditure observed at that time, proposed staffing levels and arrangements for the provision of mission support. The Committee therefore authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $1,186,320 (or 40 per cent of the requested amount). For 2016, the overall level of approved funding for the Office amounted to $7,916,400. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that as at 30 November 2016, expenditures against this commitment authority totalled $302,200 and that overall expenditures against the appropriation and the commitment authority amounted to $6,955,100, or 87.9 per cent of the approved level of resources. The report of the Secretary-General indicates that appropriation for the expenditures against the commitment authority will be sought in the context of the overall requirements for special political missions for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/71/365/Add.6, para. 34).

Resource requirements for 2017 for the Office of the Special Envoy

8. The resources proposed for the Office of the Special Envoy for 2017 amount to $15,487,300 (net), reflecting an increase of $8,757,200 compared with the initial appropriation for 2016 (see table 1 below). The net increase amounts to $7,571,000 when taking into consideration the additional commitment authority and the estimated expenditures thereon. Significant increases are estimated for costs relating to international staff ($4,608,200), facilities and infrastructure ($2,154,600) and ground transportation ($1,140,900) (see table 2 below).

Table 1
Financial resources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1 January–31 December 2016				Requirements for 1 January–31 December 2017			
Category	Appropriation	Estimated expenditure	Variance	Appropriation 2016	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	Variance (2017–2016)	Net requirements for 2017[a]
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)–(2)	(4)=(1)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(5)–(4)	(8)=(5)–(3)
Civilian personnel costs	3 804.8	4 480.4	(675.6)	3 804.8	8 912.9		5 108.1	9 588.5
Operational costs	2 925.3	3 436.0	(510.7)	2 925.3	6 574.4	1 382.0	3 649.1	7 085.1
Total	**6 730.1**	**7 916.4**	**(1 186.3)**	**6 730.1**	**15 487.3**	**1 382.0**	**8 757.2**	**16 673.6**

[a] Net requirements after taking into account the estimated underexpenditure or overexpenditure for 2016.

Table 2
Summary of financial resources by major category of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1 January–31 December 2016				Requirements for 1 January–31 December 2017			
Category	Appropriation	Estimated expenditure	Variance	Appropriation 2016	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	Variance (2017–2016)	Net requirements for 2017[a]
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)–(2)	(4)=(1)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(5)–(4)	(8)=(5)–(3)
I. Civilian personnel								
1. International staff	3 560.6	4 184.0	(623.4)	3 560.6	8 168.8	–	4 608.2	8 792.2
2. National staff	244.2	296.4	(52.2)	244.2	744.1	–	499.9	796.3
Total, category I	**3 804.8**	**4 480.4**	**(675.6)**	**3 804.8**	**8 912.9**	**–**	**5 108.1**	**9 588.5**
II. Operational costs								
1. Official travel	1 135.0	1 246.5	(111.5)	1 135.0	1 059.8	–	(75.2)	1 171.3
2. Facilities and infrastructure	659.8	761.2	(101.4)	659.8	2 814.4	344.8	2 154.6	2 915.8
3. Ground transportation	53.8	185.6	(131.8)	53.8	1 194.7	828.4	1 140.9	1 326.5
4. Air transportation	492.8	658.8	(166.0)	492.8	192.8	–	(300.0)	358.8
5. Communications	260.7	260.7		260.7	260.7	44.0		260.7
6. Information technology	169.3	169.3		169.3	375.9	164.8	206.6	375.9
7. Medical					40.2	–	40.2	40.2
8. Other supplies, services and equipment	153.9	153.9		153.9	635.9	–	482.0	635.9
Total, category II	**2 925.3**	**3 436.0**	**(510.7)**	**2 925.3**	**6 574.4**	**1 382.0**	**3 649.1**	**7 085.1**
Total (net of staff assessment)	**6 730.1**	**7 916.4**	**(1 186.3)**	**6 730.1**	**15 487.3**	**1 382.0**	**8 757.2**	**16 673.6**

[a] Net requirements after taking into account the estimated underexpenditure or overexpenditure for 2016.

Staffing requirements for the Office of the Special Envoy

9. Table 3 below presents a breakdown of the positions approved for 2016 and those proposed for 2017.

Table 3
Positions

	Professional and higher categories									*General Service and related categories*			*National staff*			
	USG	*ASG*	*D-2*	*D-1*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*P-2*	*Subtotal*	*Field Security Service*	*General Service*	*Total international*	*National Professional Officer*	*Local level*	*United Nations Volunteers*	*Total*
Approved 2016	1	–	1	–	4	5	3	–	**14**	13	1	**28**	2	9	–	**39**
Proposed 2017	1	1	–	4	8	18	14	–	**46**	27	2	**75**	8	30	–	**113**
Change	–	**1**	**(1)**	**4**	**4**	**13**	**11**	–	**32**	**14**	**1**	**47**	**6**	**21**	–	**74**

10. The total proposed staffing complement for the Office of the Special Envoy for 2017 includes a total of 113 positions, reflecting an increase of 74 new positions,[1] or nearly twice the approved staffing level for 2016, with 49 positions based in Amman; 57 positions based in Sana'a; 2 positions based in Kuwait; and 5 positions based in New York. The establishment of new substantive sections is also proposed, including Office of the Chief of Staff; Office of the Deputy Head of Mission; Security Sector Section; and Public Information Section. The proposed staffing changes are summarized as follows:

(a) Thirty-nine new substantive positions, including:

(i) Three D-1 positions (2 based in Amman and 1 based in Sana'a);

(ii) Four P-5 positions (3 based in Amman and 1 based in Sana'a);

(iii) Seven P-4 positions (5 based in Amman and 2 based in Sana'a);

(iv) Six P-3 positions (3 in Amman and 3 based in Sana'a);

(v) Three Field Service positions based in Amman;

(vi) Five National Professional Officers based in Sana'a;

(vii) Eleven Local level positions (6 based in Amman and 5 based in Sana'a);

(b) Seven new security-related positions, including:

(i) Five positions (1 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 Field Service and 1 Local level) based in Sana'a;

(ii) Two positions (1 Field Service and 1 Local level) based in Amman;

(c) Twenty-five new mission support-related positions, including:

(i) One D-1 position based in Amman;

[1] Includes the 24 positions funded in 2016 under a commitment authority approved by the Advisory Committee (see para. 7 above).

(ii) Four P-4 positions based in Amman;

(iii) Three P-3 positions (2 based in Amman and 1 based in Sana'a);

(iv) Eight Field Service positions (5 based in Amman and 3 based in Sana'a);

(v) One National Professional Officer based in Amman;

(vi) Eight Local level positions (4 based in Amman, 2 based in Sana'a and 2 based in Kuwait);

(d) Three new backstopping-related positions based in New York (1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level));

(e) Proposed redeployment of four substantive positions from New York to Amman (1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 P-3) and three substantive positions from Sana'a to Amman, including two Professional positions (1 P-5 and 1 P-4) and one Field Service position to mission support;

(f) Proposed reclassification and redeployment of the existing D-2 position, Director of the Office of Political Support in Sana'a, to the level of Assistant Secretary-General as Deputy Head of Mission to be based in Amman (A/71/365/Add.6).

Comments and recommendations on staffing requirements

General comments

11. The Secretary-General indicates that the proposed staffing changes reflect the decision to move the headquarters of the Office of the Special Envoy from New York to Amman (A/71/365/Add.6, para. 27), including the redeployment of the Special Envoy, to be in closer proximity to the mission area, the Government of Yemen and other stakeholders in the region. In this regard, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that as of November 2016, 5 of the Office staff were located in Amman and 23 were located in Sana'a, with a projected deployment of 8 staff to Amman and 29 to Sana'a by the end of 2016. The Committee was also informed that the move of the Office of the Special Envoy from New York to Amman, including the move of the Special Envoy, is expected to be completed by 31 December 2016.

12. According to the Secretary-General, in terms of the formalities required with the host country, a status-of-mission agreement was submitted to the Government of Jordan through its Permanent Mission in New York on 26 July 2016 and its signature is pending with the relevant authority. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the proposed relocation of the Special Envoy to Amman, which is in line with recommendations made by the Committee in the context of other special political missions, and trusts that all efforts will be taken to conclude the related status-of-mission agreement.**

13. Concerning the recruitment status of the 24 positions funded from the commitment authority authorized by the Advisory Committee, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, as of 31 October 2016, 11 of those positions had either been filled or that selected candidates were completing on-boarding procedures. Selection processes with respect to four positions was in process while the remaining 9 of the 24 positions were either still vacant or being advertised. In this

connection, the Committee was also provided with information indicating that a 17 per cent vacancy rate has been applied to the continuing international positions based on the projected average vacancy rate in 2016.

14. The Advisory Committee recognizes that the Office of the Special Envoy faces operational and security challenges that have an impact on the pace of recruitment. In addition, in the absence of an agreed status-of-mission agreement with the Government of Jordan, the envisaged deployment of staff to Amman in the numbers intended may be neither prudent nor realistic. The Committee also considers that certain positions proposed, for example the proposed new position of Senior Electoral Affairs Officer (P-5) to be located in Sana'a, may not be required in the immediate future. **Under the circumstances and taking into account the significant increase in the proposed staffing level of the mission (see para. 10 above), the Advisory Committee trusts that the Office will fill the proposed positions only when the functions of the positions can be realistically carried out and operationally supported.**

15. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that the proposal reflects vacancy factors of 50 per cent for new Professional-level positions and 15 per cent for new Field Service, General Service, National Professional Officer and Local level positions in estimating 2017 staffing resource requirements. **Taking into account prevailing recruitment timelines for staff positions in the Office of the Special Envoy and the pending status of the status-of-forces agreement with the host country, the Advisory Committee recommends that a vacancy factor of 60 per cent be applied for all new Professional-level positions to be established in 2017. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

Specific staffing proposals: substantive components

16. As regards the staffing proposals to increase the substantive capacity of the Office and, in particular, the proposal for the new Political Affairs Section to include 18 positions, of which 7 would be located in Amman and the remaining 11 in Sana'a, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the staff based in Sana'a would be responsible for maintaining regular contact with Yemeni political parties, movements and civil society organizations, while the staff based in Amman would be responsible for maintaining regular contact with interlocutors based outside of Yemen. **The Advisory Committee considers that the matter of the location of the Office's political capacity should be kept under close review and adjusted depending on the political and security developments on the ground.**

17. The report of the Secretary-General also includes a proposal to establish a new Security Sector Section responsible for supporting the De-escalation and Coordination Committee, which was established as a result of an agreement reached by the Yemeni parties. The total proposed staffing for the new section for 2017 includes 4 positions based in Amman and 11 positions in Sana'a, which includes the establishment of 5 new Liaison Officer positions (1 P-4, 2 P-3 and 2 National Professional Officer positions). Based on information made available, the Advisory Committee observes that all these new positions are proposed for the same basic purpose: to provide technical advice to the Yemeni parties on ceasefire arrangements, negotiated withdrawals, handover of heavy weapons and other

security arrangements as agreed by the parties. **The Advisory Committee is not fully convinced by the justification provided for the number of Liaison Officer positions proposed for the Security Sector Section and therefore recommends against the establishment of one of the proposed new P-3 Liaison Officer positions. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

18. The proposed establishment of a new Office of the Deputy Head of Mission to be located in Amman would consist of six positions for 2017 (1 ASG, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 Field Service and 1 Local level). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed reclassification and redeployment of the existing Director (D-2) position to the Assistant Secretary-General level is required due to the increased complexity of the military and political situation in Yemen and in light of the greater management and leadership capacity required. **The Advisory Committee does not object to the establishment of the new Office of the Deputy Head of Mission. However, the Committee is not convinced that the entire proposed staffing complement is required for the Office of the Special Envoy at this time. In this regard, the Committee considers that the proposed establishment of the new position of Administrative Assistant (Field Service) to support the Deputy Head of Mission is not adequately justified and recommends against the establishment of this position. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

19. The Advisory Committee also notes that the Office would retain two existing substantive positions (1 P-4 and 1 General Service (Other Level)) in New York to support the Office of the Special Envoy by engaging with the Security Council, Member States and other stakeholders in New York (A/71/365/Add.1, para. 38). With just one professional position remaining at Headquarters, the Committee is of the view that the continuation of the General Service position for the provision of administrative assistance would be excessive. **The Advisory Committee considers that any administrative support requirements for the remaining capacity of the Office of the Special Envoy at Headquarters should be provided by existing capacity within the Department of Political Affairs. The Committee therefore recommends the abolishment of the General Service (Other Level) position currently located in New York. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

Specific staffing proposals: support component

20. The report of the Secretary-General indicates that the support component for the Office of the Special Envoy will be based on the principles of a light, flexible multifunctional footprint, integrated mission support delivery with the United Nations country team inside Yemen and the continued reliance on the Kuwait Joint Support Office to provide support for transactional human resources, travel and finance (A/71/365/Add.6, para. 42). Mission support staffing proposals include the establishment of 25 new positions and the inward redeployment of one position (see para. 10 above), increasing the mission support-related staffing complement from 10 positions approved for 2016 to 36 proposed positions in 2017 (ibid., para. 41).

21. Specifically, the proposal includes the establishment of eight new Field Service positions (5 based in Amman and 3 based in Sana'a). These include the establishment of one Property Management Assistant and one Claims Assistant, both

to be located in Amman within the Property Management/Central Warehousing Unit. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that the overall proposed staffing level in Amman (49 positions) justifies the establishment of this level of capacity to handle these functions, given the small amount of property in place at that location at this early stage of operations. Therefore, the Committee recommends against the establishment of one of the two proposed Field Service positions. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.** Similarly, the proposal envisages the establishment of the Office of the Chief of Mission Support, with a proposed staffing level of eight positions, including six in Amman and two positions in Sana'a. The proposal also includes an inward redeployment of an existing Field Service position from the Office of Political Support in Sana'a to the Office of Chief of Mission Support in Amman. **The Advisory Committee does not see the merit in this proposal, particularly in view of the expressed requirement for the Office to strengthen its substantive capacities, and recommends against the proposed redeployment. If the Office decides that the position is no longer required, it should be proposed for abolishment in the next budget proposal.**

22. In addition, the proposal includes the establishment of two local level positions to be based in Kuwait within the Kuwait Joint Support Office, one within the proposed new Finance and Budget Section and another within the proposed new Human Resources Section. The report indicates that this is part of the Office's efforts to achieve a small footprint for administrative services. The Advisory Committee notes that in addition to these new positions, the Human Resources Section would be staffed with three other new positions (1 P-4, 1 Field Service and 1 Local level) based in Amman. The newly created Finance and Budget Section would have two other new positions, one (P-4) in Amman and one (National Professional Officer) in Sana'a. **In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls the comments and observations it has made in recent years and reiterates its view that an independent verification and review of the full costs and benefits, both qualitative and quantitative, of the Support Office would be useful (see A/69/628, para. 56; A/70/7/Add.10, para. 58; and A/71/595/Add.1, para. 23). In view of the foregoing, the Committee recommends against approval of the proposed establishment of two positions (Local level) in the Kuwait Joint Support Office. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.** The Committee provides its comments and recommendations regarding the Kuwait Joint Support Office and other staffing structures in Kuwait in its main report on estimates in respect of special political missions and good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/71/595).

23. An additional three new backstopping-related positions, based in New York, are also proposed, including one Human Resources Officer (P-4), one Acquisition Planning and Logistics Officer (P-3), both to be located in the Department of Field Support, and one Programme Budget Assistant (General Service (Other level)) to be located in the Department of Management. **While recognizing that the establishment or strengthening of field-based special political missions imposes an additional workload on those offices at Headquarters required to support them, the Advisory Committee considers that the case for the proposed level of backstopping was not made sufficiently clear in the current proposal.**

Therefore, the Committee supports the establishment of the positions for Acquisition and Logistics Officer (P-3) and Programme Budget Assistant (General Service (Other level)), however, given that capacity for human resources functions is also proposed for the Office in Amman (see para. 22 above), the Committee recommends against the establishment of the Human Resources Officer (P-4) position at Headquarters. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.

24. Overall, in each of the mission components (substantive; security; and support), the Advisory Committee notes a relatively small number of local positions as a proportion of the total proposed staffing level of 113 positions (7 National Professional Officer and 26 Local level positions). As a matter of general principle, the Committee encourages use of local capacity to the greatest extent possible at mission locations. **In the case of the Office of the Special Envoy, the Advisory Committee is of the view that greater use could be made of local capacities. The Committee is of the view that a review should be carried out to determine which of the functions located in Amman or Sana'a could best be performed by locally recruited staff and looks forward to the outcome of this analysis being reflected in the staffing proposals of the Office of the Special Envoy for 2018** (see also A/71/595 for the Committee's general observations relating to the nationalization of positions at special political missions).

25. **Subject to its comments and recommendations in paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the Secretary-General's staffing proposals for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen.**

Comments and recommendations on operational costs

26. The proposed resources for operational costs for the Office of the Special Envoy amount to $6,574,400, reflecting an increase of $3,649,100 compared with the appropriation for 2016 (see table 2 above). The main increases between the proposed requirements for 2017 and the approved resources are related to higher requirements under facilities and infrastructure ($2,154,600) and ground transportation ($1,140,900). The Advisory Committee was informed that increased requirements under facilities and infrastructure included costs for: rental of premises; alteration and renovation services; acquisition of prefabricated facilities; acquisition of office furniture and equipment for the new staff based in Amman and Sana'a; and maintenance services. Under ground transportation, the increase is attributable to: the proposed acquisition of four armoured vehicles for use in Sana'a and nine soft-skin vehicles; the rental of vehicles during surge visits; and increases in insurance, repairs and vehicle operating costs.

27. Resources amounting to $1,059,800 are proposed to provide for the official travel of the Special Envoy and his staff for consultations with regional actors and Member States and for training related requirements, reflecting a small decrease of $75,200 compared with the amount approved for this purpose in 2016. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of actual trips undertaken in 2016, which show that some 28 trips were taken from New York to the region and elsewhere to conduct political consultations. In terms of the Office's compliance with the 16-day advance ticket purchase rule, the Committee notes zero

compliance for the more than 40 trips taken by Office staff during 2016. **The Advisory Committee expects that official travel costs will decline significantly in 2017 since almost all of the Office's staff will be located in the region by that time. The Committee also stresses the need for the Office to comply with the 16-day advance ticket purchase rule to the greatest extent possible and for increased uses of alternative means of communication. The Committee therefore recommends a 5 per cent reduction in the proposed resource requirements for official travel.**

28. **Subject to the its comments and recommendations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for operational costs.**

B. Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi

Background

29. In its resolution 2248 (2015), the Security Council welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Adviser on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi to work with the Government of Burundi and other concerned stakeholders in support of an inclusive Burundian dialogue and peaceful resolution of the conflict and of international efforts to build and sustain peace. Subsequently, in its resolution 2279 (2016), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General, through the good offices of his Special Adviser, to support the inter-Burundian dialogue and, in this regard, to coordinate and work with the East African Community-led mediator and his facilitator, as well as the high-level delegation from the African Union, and to provide technical and substantive support to the mediation. The Council subsequently passed resolution 2303 (2016), authorizing the deployment of a United Nations police component under the authority of the Special Adviser with a mandate to monitor the security situation and support the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in monitoring human rights violations and abuses. In the same resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General to swiftly implement the strengthening of the Office of the Special Adviser, by substantially increasing the number of political officers in Burundi in order to: (a) engage with all stakeholders to the crisis; (b) provide substantive support to the inter-Burundian dialogue; and (c) work with all Burundian parties to develop confidence-building measures to improve the human rights and security situation (A/71/365/Add.6, paras. 46-58).

30. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/248 B, approved an appropriation of $7,763,700 to cover the resource requirements of the Office for 2016, including the establishment of 33 positions. The Committee was informed that expenditures for the Office against this appropriation are estimated at $7,548,700 by the end of 2016. Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with an organizational chart indicating that the Special Adviser and his immediate office are currently located in New York (5 positions) while all other substantive units (12 positions), a Mission Support Unit (10 positions) and a Staff Security and Safety Unit (4 positions) are located in Burundi. In addition, a Mediation Support Team (comprising 2 positions) is currently based in Nairobi.

31. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the Special Adviser's team deployed to Burundi in January 2016. The report also indicates that the major cost drivers related to the ongoing deployment include logistics arrangements, more frequent travel within Burundi, the region and internationally, as required, as well as other staff and operational costs to meet the requirements of the mandate of the Office as the Burundi political dialogue progresses. Costs are also associated with plans to move to a new compound for the Office of the Special Adviser in Bujumbura (A/71/365/Add.6, para. 72). It is also indicated that administrative support for the staff of the Office of the Special Adviser deployed in Burundi is provided by the Regional Support Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, which provides supply chain, cashier, finance and procurement services, with a small office support team deployed in Bujumbura to support the day-to-day administrative and logistical needs of the team (ibid., paras. 62 and 73).

Resource requirements for the Office of the Special Adviser for 2017

32. The resources proposed for the Office of the Special Adviser for 2017 amount to $11,927,100, reflecting an increase of $4,163,400 (or 53 per cent) compared with the initial appropriation for 2016 (see table 4 below). More than half of this increase is attributable to increases in the estimated costs relating to increased staffing levels ($2,352,300), with smaller increases in official travel ($384,900), facilities and infrastructure ($366,500) and information technology ($346,700) (see table 5 below).

Table 4
Financial resources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1 January to 31 December 2016				*Requirements for 1 January–31 December 2017*			
Category	*Appropriation*	*Estimated expenditure*	*Variance*	*Appropriation 2016*	*Total non-recurrent requirements*	*Total non-recurrent requirements*	*Variance (2017–2016)*	*Net requirements for 2017[a]*
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)–(2)	(4)=(1)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(5)–(4)	(8)=(5)–(3)
Civilian personnel costs	3 202.8	3 289.8	187.0)	3 202.8	5 555.1		2 352.3	5 642.1
Operational costs	4 560.9	4 258.9	302.0	4 560.9	6 372.0	426.8	1 811.1	6 070.0
Total	**7 763.7**	**7 548.7**	**215.0**	**7 763.7**	**11 927.1**	**426.8**	**4 163.4**	**11 712.1**

[a] Net requirements after taking into account the estimated underexpenditure or overexpenditure for 2016.

Table 5

Summary of financial resources by major category of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1 January–31 December 2016				Requirements for 1 January–31 December 2017			
Category	Appropriation	Estimated expenditure	Variance	Apportionment for 2016	Total requirements	Variance (2017 vs. 2016)	Net requirements for 2017
	(1)	(2)	(3) = (1) – (2)	(4)	(5)	(6) = (5) – (4)	(7) = (5) – (3)
I. Civilian personnel							
1. International staff	3 089.4	3 126.3	(36.9)	3 089.4	5 274.8	2 185.4	5 311.7
2. National staff	113.4	163.5	(50.1)	113.4	280.3	166.9	330.4
Total, category I	**3 202.8**	**3 289.8**	**(87.0)**	**3 202.8**	**5 555.1**	**2 352.3**	**5 642.1**
II. Operational costs							
1. Consultants	116.3	116.3		116.3	370.6	254.3	370.6
2. Official travel	1 412.1	1 260.2	151.9	1 412.1	1 797.0	384.9	1 645.1
3. Facilities and infrastructure	1 682.6	1 721.8	(39.2)	1 682.6	2 049.1	366.9	2 088.3
4. Ground transportation	180.4	40.8	139.6	180.4	364.5	184.0	224.5
5. Communications	509.7	311.6	198.1	509.7	589.2	79.5	391.1
6. Information technology	203.7	411.5	(207.8)	203.7	550.4	346.7	758.2
7. Medical	204.0	218.1	(14.1)	204.0	247.2	43.2	261.3
8. Other supplies, services and equipment	252.1	178.6	73.5	252.1	404.2	152.1	330.7
Total, category II	**4 560.9**	**4 258.9**	**302.0**	**4 560.9**	**6 372.0**	**1 811.1**	**6 070.0**
Total (net of staff assessment)	**7 763.7**	**7 548.7**	**215.0**	**7 763.7**	**11 927.1**	**4 163.4**	**11 712.1**

[a] Net requirements after taking into account the estimated underexpenditure or overexpenditure for 2016.

Staffing requirements

33. Table 6 below presents a breakdown of the positions approved for 2016 and those proposed for 2017. The proposal includes 20 new positions (2 P-5, 7 P-4, 2 P-3, 5 Field Service, 1 General Service (Other level), 1 National Professional Officer and 2 Local level).

Table 6
Positions

	Professional and higher categories								*General Service and related categories*			*National staff*			
	USG	*ASG*	*D-2*	*D-1*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*P-2*	*Subtotal*	*Field Security Service*	*General Service (Other levels)*	*Subtotal international*	*National Professional Officer*	*Local level*	*United Nations Volunteers*	*Total*
Approved 2016	1		1	2	6	6	2		**18**	7	1	**26**	2	5		**33**
Proposed 2017	1		1	2	8	13	4		**29**	12	2	**43**	3	7		**53**
Change					**2**	**7**	**2**		**11**	**5**	**1**	**17**	**1**	**2**		**20**

34. The proposed staffing complement for the Office of the Special Adviser for 2017 would total 53 positions (1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 8 P-5, 13 P-4, 4 P-3, 12 Field Service, 2 General Service, 3 National Officer, 7 Local level), reflecting the proposed increase of 20 new positions and a continuation of 33 existing positions from 2016. Proposed staffing changes are summarized as follows:

(a) Fifteen new substantive positions, comprising:

(i) Three new positions (1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)), for the Office of the Special Adviser in New York, for planning for the deployment of a United Nations police contribution and for analysis of information;

(ii) One new Political Affairs Officer backstopping position (P-3) to be located within Department of Political Affairs at Headquarters;

(iii) Five new positions (1 P-5 and 4 P-4) to strengthen the Dialogue Support Unit in Burundi, including at three regional offices;

(iv) Five new positions (1 P-5, 2 P-4 and 2 Field Service) for the Security and Rule of Law Unit in Burundi;

(v) One new National Professional Officer position proposed to undertake protocol functions in Burundi.

(b) Three new mission support positions (1 Field Service and 2 Local level) based in Burundi;

(c) Two new Security Officer positions (2 Field Service) based in Burundi;

(d) Proposed redeployment of two Political Affairs Officers (1 P-5 and 1 P-4) in the existing Mediation Support Team, from Nairobi to Burundi (A/71/365/Add.6, paras. 79-85).

Comments and recommendations on staffing requirements

General comments

35. The report of the Secretary-General indicates that the political and security situation in Burundi remains precarious (A/71/365/Add.6, para. 46). In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that the proposal for the Office does not

foresee the relocation of the Special Adviser and his immediate office from New York closer to the mission area. In terms of the formalities required for the presence of the Office of the Special Adviser in Burundi, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that a status-of-mission agreement had been prepared and submitted to the Permanent Mission of Burundi in New York in June 2016, but that no reply had been received thus far. The Committee was further informed that the Office has been experiencing significant delays with regard to the receipt of the necessary visas to allow for the deployment of its civilian staff to Burundi. Furthermore, the Committee recalls that, in July 2016, the Security Council, by its resolution 2303 (2016) authorized the deployment of a United Nations police component, with a ceiling of 228 individual police officers (ibid., para. 55). The Secretary-General's budget proposal for 2017 contains no resource requirements relating to that component.

36. As with the case of the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen (see para. 14 above) and the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria (see A/71/595/Add.1, para. 26), the Advisory Committee recognizes that the Office faces operational and security challenges that have an impact on the pace of recruitment of staff to newly approved positions. In this connection, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that a total of 29 positions were currently encumbered (from the total authorized staffing level of 33 positions). **Under the circumstances and taking into account the significant increase in the proposed staffing level of the mission (see para. 34 above), the Advisory Committee trusts that the Office will fill the proposed positions only when the functions of the positions can be realistically carried out and operationally supported.**

37. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that the proposal reflects vacancy factors of 50 per cent for new Professional-level positions and 35 per cent for new Field and General Service, National Professional Officer and Local level positions in estimating staffing resource requirements. **Taking into account the aforementioned factors, the Advisory Committee recommends that a vacancy factor of 70 per cent be applied for all new Professional-level positions to be established in 2017. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

Staffing proposals

38. As regards the staffing proposals to increase the substantive capacity of the Office and, in particular, the proposal to increase its capacity in New York, the Secretary-General proposes the creation of three positions for Political Affairs Officers and one Team Assistant position (1 P-4, 2 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)), three of which are to be located in the New York Office of the Special Adviser. It is indicated that this strengthening would assist in tasks associated with planning for the deployment of a United Nations police contribution, analysis of information and liaison with United Nations offices and entities at Headquarters. In addition, one of the new P-3 positions is proposed to be located within the Department of Political Affairs to provide political backstopping capacity for the mission.

39. The Advisory Committee notes that there are currently five positions established for the New York Office of the Special Adviser (1 USG, 2 P-5, 1 P-4,

1 General Service (Other level). **Information provided to the Advisory Committee does not, in its view, adequately explain and justify why the functions to be carried out under the proposed new positions cannot be performed from within existing capacities. The Committee recommends against the establishment of the four additional positions proposed for supporting the Office in New York. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

40. The proposal of the Secretary-General includes a proposed strengthening of the Dialogue Support Unit by the establishment of five new positions (1 P-5 and 4 P-4) to be located in Burundi. The Unit is currently staffed with five positions (1 D-1, 2 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 P-3). It is intended that three of the four new P-4 positions would be deployed as heads of local offices outside Bujumbura and would engage with local-level stakeholders to ensure that grass-roots initiatives are reflected in the inter-Burundian dialogue. The Secretary-General justifies the establishment of the new Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) in order to provide coordination of the work of the political officers deployed at the local offices. **It is not, however, clear to the Advisory Committee why such functions could not be performed by the existing senior staff of the Unit. The Committee recommends against the establishment of a P-5 Senior Political Affairs Officer position in the Dialogue Support Unit. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

41. In addition, the proposed establishment of a new position for Protocol Officer (National Professional Officer), to be located as part of the Head of Office's immediate staff in Burundi to perform protocol functions and liaison with national counterparts, is, in the view of the Advisory Committee, not convincing in light of prevailing operational realities, such as the ongoing location of the Special Adviser and other senior staff outside the mission area. **The Advisory Committee recommends against the establishment of the position for Protocol Officer (National Professional Officer) at this time. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

42. The report of the Secretary-General also includes a proposal to increase the staff in the Security and Rule of Law Unit in Burundi by establishing five new positions (1 P-5, 2 P-4 and 2 Field Service) in order to liaise with stakeholders and advise on the development, implementation and evaluation of rule of law activities in line with international norms and standards. The Unit is currently staffed with a Principal Security Sector Reform Officer (D-1) and a Rule of Law Officer (P-4). With respect to the two new proposed Field Service positions, the Advisory Committee was informed that the intention would be that they would perform functions as Team Assistants and provide administrative support to both the Dialogue Support Unit and the Security and Rule of Law Unit. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the workload of the two Units does not yet justify the establishment of two Team Assistant positions. Therefore the Committee recommends against the proposed establishment of one of the Field Service positions for the Security and Rule of Law Unit. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

43. **Subject to its comments and recommendations in paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the Secretary-General's staffing proposals for the Office of the Special Adviser on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi.**

Comments and recommendations on operational costs

44. The proposed resources for operational costs for the Office of the Special Adviser amount to $6,372,000, reflecting an increase of $1,811,100 compared with the appropriation for 2016 (see table 5 above). The main increases between the proposed requirements for 2017 and the approved resources are mainly related to consultants ($254,000), official travel ($384,900) and information technology ($346,700).

45. Resources amounting to $1,797,000 are proposed to provide for the travel of the Special Adviser and his staff to visit regional stakeholders and to ensure their participation in all rounds of formal dialogue between the parties, including visits to Headquarters, as required. The amount also includes travel for training purposes amounting to $178,300. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of proposed training activities and related travel costs courses for specific courses. As regards training intended for staff in the substantive units, most of the courses proposed would take place in Geneva or in New York, and are specifically designed to enhance the skills of international staff in areas such as leadership, management, peace processes and rule of law. In the case of the proposed training for mission support personnel, the courses would generally take place in Entebbe, Uganda, on technical mission-support related topics.

46. **While acknowledging the benefits of initial training requirements and subsequent skills enhancement, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the proposal to train mostly international staff to acquire skills for the positions they have been recently recruited to perform suggests a deficiency in the Office's staff selection processes. Therefore, the Committee recommends a 20 per cent reduction, or $36,000, in the resources proposed to cover travel for training purposes.**

47. The Advisory Committee also requested a breakdown of the travel undertaken in 2016 and the planned travel for 2017, but was not provided with a satisfactory response. **In view of the magnitude of the resource requirements proposed for official travel, the Advisory Committee reiterates the views it has repeatedly expressed concerning the judicious use of travel resources, in particular its view that the primary consideration in authorizing official travel should be whether direct face-to-face contact is necessary for mandate implementation. The Committee also reiterates the importance of advance ticket booking and use of videoconferencing capabilities, to the greatest extent possible, as a means to limit the travel costs (see also A/70/7, paras. 104 and 108).**

48. With regard to consultants, the Secretary-General is proposing resources amounting to $370,600 to provide for services of six external consultants in 2017, representing a threefold increase in the resources authorized for consultants in 2016. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the consultants would provide (a) specialized knowledge, expertise and substantive advice on constitutional and legal matters related to mediation and dialogue methodologies; (b) expertise on governance models, separation of powers and minority issues; (c) advice on technical areas relating to rule of law in Burundi, including the judiciary, police and corrections; and (d) assistance on the security sector in Burundi, including areas of accountability, integrity and human rights.

49. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the expertise or capacity sought for the majority of the services requested should already exist within the Secretariat, including, for example, within the Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In addition, the Office either already has staff capacity in these particular fields or in the related positions proposed for establishment. Therefore the Committee finds the proposal for consultants to be excessive and recommends a 50 per cent reduction, or $180,000, in the resources requested for this purpose.**

50. **Subject to its comments and recommendations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for operational costs.**

III. Recommendation

51. The Secretary-General's budgetary proposals for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi for 2017, are set out in paragraph 88 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365/Add.6). The requirements for these missions were presented separately so as to reflect the latest developments on the ground (A/71/365, para. 18) as well as the most recent related decisions of the Security Council relating to the two missions.

52. **Subject to the recommendations contained in the paragraphs above, as well as recommendations contained in its main report (A/71/595), the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2017 for these two special political missions under thematic cluster I.**

53. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Approve the budgets for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, for 2017 amounting to $25,100,300, net of staff assessment;**

(b) **To appropriate, under the procedures provided for in paragraph 11 of annex I to resolution 41/213, an additional amount of $ 26,071,600 (net of staff assessment) under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, after taking into account the estimated overexpenditure in 2016 amounting to $971,300;**

(c) **To appropriate an amount of $1,834,800, under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.**